

CHALLENGE TO HEDONISM

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it could accommodate the maximum number of people, with plain matting on the floors, some plain chairs, and a number of by no means remarkable water colours (wedding presents at a guess) on the walls. The little room they at once saw as the Secretary's den. It was lined with blue-books blue-books, which, despite the annual turn-out, on which Mrs Webb, as a well-trained housekeeper, insisted, flowed over into the narrow hall and got mixed up among the coats and hats there and also lined the walls of the long narrow double room on the entrance floor, which served at once as dining-room and study for the partners I remember, on the first occasion on which I went to dine in Grosvenor Road, wondering, since it was one of those London houses whose anatomy one perceives at a glance, where was the study, and deciding, that for greater quiet they must have converted some airy upstairs bedroom to that purpose. It was not so. Actually, they worked on the dining-room table. There, after breakfast had been cleared, they settled down; thence, at a quarter to one, they removed themselves and their papers, on the entry of the maid to lay lunch. To me, at the time, it seemed an intolerable arrangement. To them, it was not intolerable, and that for an interesting reason. He deals with papers of every sort,—letters, reports, documents—so rapidly that his desk never has any *paperasses* on it. Whereas most of us glance at

an Agenda or Report, coming by the post, and
lay it aside
for future study make notes and have to keep
them some-
where his eye travels at an incredible speed
over written
or printed matter, and records what he wants
to retain
indelibly on his memory So, while the
wastepaper basket
bulged every morning, the files were not there.
He once
gravely offended a most important personage
who brought
him a solemn document to study by handing it
back after
the briefest and apparently most casual
inspection He